

This learning guide is designed for use by Professional Learning Communities, learning coaches and teacher leaders or as a self-paced study to enhance the use of natural supports to increase the engagement of students with significant disabilities with the school community.

### Natural Supports: *In Conversation with Dr. Erik Carter*

This guide is intended to facilitate conversation



#### General synopsis

In this short video clip, Dr. Erik Carter discusses some signs that may indicate too much adult support is being provided to a student.

#### Key understandings

- Providing too much adult support can be a barrier to participating in social situations and learning activities in the classroom.
- It is also possible to provide too much peer support.
- It is important to provide just enough adult support to promote success but not so much that it interferes with independence and participation.

#### Questions for discussion

- What questions could you ask to determine if a student with significant disabilities is receiving the right amount of support?
- What are some strategies that adults can use to fade the amount of support they provide?
- What are some challenges involved in fading support?

#### For more information

- For resources and training materials for mentoring, see: Alberta Mentoring Partnership website: <http://www.albertamentors.ca/>
- For an overview of the research on peer mentors for students with significant disabilities, see: Carter, E. (2011). Supporting peer relationships. In M. Snell & F. Brown (Eds.), *Instruction of students with severe disabilities* (pp. 431–460). Boston: Pearson.
- For practical information on peer buddies, see: Carter, E. (2008). *Peer buddy programs for successful school inclusion*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- For an overview of peer support techniques, see: Carter, E. (2008). Promoting rigor, relevance, and relationships through peer support interventions. *TASH Connections*, March/April, pp. 20–23. [http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports/pdfs/Peer\\_Supports\\_TASH\\_Connections\\_2008.pdf](http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports/pdfs/Peer_Supports_TASH_Connections_2008.pdf)
- For examples of activities and materials related to natural supports, see: Natural Supports Project, University of Wisconsin-Madison <http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports/resources.php>

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